



# QUESTION 1

## Are more Kentuckians ready for postsecondary education?

“Kentucky loses too many students at key points in the education pipeline. For every 100 ninth graders in Kentucky, 65 students graduate from high school, 39 enter college, 26 are still enrolled their sophomore year, and only 15 students graduate within three years from a two-year program or within six years from a four-year program.”

*The National Center for Public Policy  
and Higher Education*

Kentucky must do a better job preparing high school students and adults for postsecondary study. An overwhelming majority of high school students tell us they plan to continue their education after graduation but have not tackled the rigorous courses that prepare them for college-level work. Many adults recognize the need for advanced training but have not completed high school, or have been out of school for a while and need to refresh their skills. Postsecondary institutions must play a role in helping high schools prepare each and every one of their students for at least two years of postsecondary training, and Kentucky Adult Education must help more of their learners transition to college. For Kentucky to be competitive, all students—regardless of income level, age, gender, or skin color—need better access to high-quality instruction and guidance counseling that will lead them to postsecondary opportunities.

Adult education enrollment has increased 135 percent in four years.

Kentucky had the highest increase in the nation in the percent of adults with a high school credential from 1990-2000.

More high school students are taking college preparatory courses. Since 1998, the number of dual enrollment courses taken in high school has increased five-fold, and the ratio of students taking Advanced Placement courses nearly doubled.

PROGRESSES

# SEVEN CHALLENGES

Too many high school graduates entering college are not adequately prepared. Compared to top-performing states, middle and high school students perform poorly on national assessments, including the National Assessment of Education Progress, Advanced Placement exams, and the ACT.

Minority and low-income students are not taking challenging courses in high school, do not score well on standardized tests, and often are not encouraged to pursue college.

Adult education enrollment represents only 12 percent of adults at the lowest literacy levels.

From 1995-2000, 11,351 people with less than a high school diploma between the ages of 22-29 moved to Kentucky while 5,087 left the state, resulting in a net gain of nearly 6,264 undereducated young adults.

Only 62 percent of students in grades 7 through 12 are taught by teachers with a major in their field, compared to 81 percent in top-performing states.

# How We Get to Yes

- Postsecondary involvement in efforts to restructure the high school curriculum and assessments.
- Smoother transitions from high school, area technology centers, and GED programs to college through closer alignment of the secondary, adult, and postsecondary systems.
- More concerted efforts to close achievement gaps and increase college going among minority, low-income, first-generation, and adult students.
- More high school students taking Advanced Placement and college-level courses.
- Strengthened guidance counseling to provide early college awareness and planning.
- More explicit information from the postsecondary community about what it takes to succeed in college and the skilled trades.
- More adults participating in adult education programs and earning GEDs.
- Better coordination among KCTCS and adult education programs to provide low- or no-cost college remediation services.
- Better preparation and training for P-12 and adult education instructors and leaders at all levels.
- Expanded efforts to recruit a diverse teaching force and to keep good teachers working and living in Kentucky.

